


Prescriptions:  
To Be Taken  
Immediately, To Be  
Taken For Life  
(1915)



Richard Clarke Cabot  
Edith Motter Lamb



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# PREScriptions

*To be taken immediately*  
*To be taken for life*

A COLLECTION OF EXTRACTS FROM  
DR. RICHARD C. CABOT'S  
"WHAT MEN LIVE BY"

SELECTED BY EDITH MOTTER LAMB

R<sub>x</sub>

BOSTON AND NEW YORK  
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TO RICHARD C. CABOT  
MY PHYSICIAN AND FRIEND  
IN GRATEFUL ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF THE  
CONFIDENCE WHICH HAS MADE THIS  
BOOK OF SELECTIONS POSSIBLE

464894

## FOREWORD

If you have read *What Men Live By*, then these selections will, like a jeweled rosary, recall the gems you most desire to appropriate, and give you daily inspiration concerning the four great forces by which men live.

If you have not read the book, familiarity with the selections will probably leave you unsatisfied until you do.

If you have neither time nor taste for the book as a whole, there is much to appreciate and appropriate in the selections alone that will make Work easier, Play more rational, Love more beautiful, Worship more real.

E. M. L.



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# **PRESCRIPTIONS**

## **INTRODUCTION**

**WORK, Play, Love, and Prayer** are open to rich and poor, to young and old; they are of all times and all races in whom character is an ideal.

The religion of work, or art, and of love is not the strongest or the truest; but it is a good beginning. There one finds an outlet for devotion and gropes toward God.

**R<sub>x</sub>**

**REAL LIFE**

an indefinite  
amount

Take a full dose after  
meals and at bedtime

“Real Life,” then, if it is to mean the nourishing, sustaining, and developing of existence, demands work, play,

and love, and so much of the material and spiritual conditions of existence as make these possible.

Every human being, man, woman, and child, hero and convict, neurasthenic and deep-sea fisherman, needs the blessing of God through these four gifts. . . . When you try to put courage and aspiration into the gelatinous character of the alcoholic or the street-walker, you will fail unless you can give responsibility, recreation, affection, and through them a glimpse of God.

## WORK

WORK, like morality and self-government, differs from play because play is spontaneous and delightful, while work is done soberly and against resistance. Nevertheless, we work because we want the fruit of work — not from pure dogged determination.

Work is doing what you don't *now* enjoy for the sake of a future which you clearly see and desire. Drudgery is doing under strain what you don't now enjoy and for no end that you can appreciate.

To learn how to work is so to train our imagination that we can feel the stimulus from distant futures, as the coast cities of California get heat, light, and power from distant mountain streams. In all work and all education

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the worker should be in touch with the distant sources of interest, else he is being trained to slavery, and not to self-government and self-respect.

This working faith is not pure speculation. It includes a foretaste of the satisfaction to come. We plunge into it as we jump into a cold bath, not because the present sensations are altogether sweet, but because they are mingled with a dawning awareness of the glow to follow. We do our work happily because the future is alive in the present — not like a ghost but like a leader.

In the beginning, something or somebody must magically entice us into doing a bit of work. Having done that bit, we can see the treasure of its results; these results will in turn spur us to redoubled efforts, and so once more to increased rewards. Given the initial miracle and we are soon established in the habit and the enjoyment of work.

If we are physically fresh and not worried, there is a grim exhilaration, a sort of frowning delight, in taking up a heavy load and feeling that our strength is adequate to it. ✓

Without work many a woman has thought herself fundamentally selfish, or if she was not so rough with herself, her relations have vented a similar lament.

We are like wells. When our life is full, the dregs of shallow selfishness at the bottom do not often rise to consciousness. But when we are empty, our selfishness is necessarily exposed, and we are to blame only if we have made no effort to fill up the aching void with what we know belongs there, — especially work.

The world is primarily a working world. From the insects to the angels, creation hums with work, and through work fits us for play.

Idleness is corrosive.

Deprived of work, people exhaust themselves like crazed animals beating against their bars, even when the cage is of their own making.

We are, many of us, creatures who can be purified only by motion, as the running stream drops out its pollutions when its current grows swift, but gets defiled as soon as it stagnates in shallows.

Work dispels discouragement because it turns consciousness away from our disheartening littleness and lights up the big world — our world — of possible achievement.

Deprived of work and its comradeship, we are lonely and therefore discouraged, for loneliness is so close to discouragement that it is hard to slip the knife-blade of a definition between them.

To find one's work is to find one's place in the world.

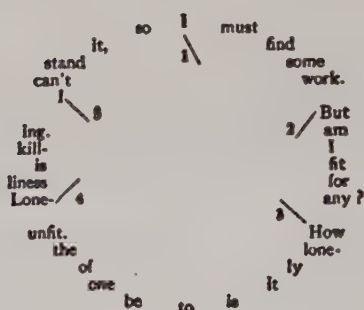
In idleness no one is needed. Idly to watch the busy people in one's own country or abroad is a heart-breaking business.

Courage for life, then, comes when one gets out of isolation, owns, surveys, and fences in a bit of the uncharted world. Such a place-in-the-world is a job.

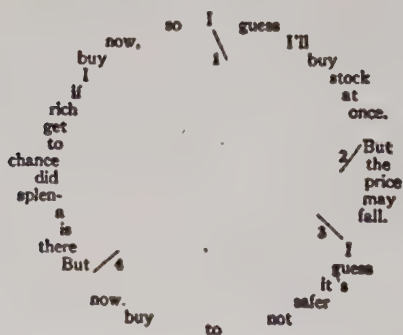
As a physician, I have had the happiness of seeing work cure many persons who have suffered from that trembling palsy of the soul which results from overmastering doubts, hesitation, vacillation, and fear. Work often cures this kind of skepticism ("solvitur ambulando"), which is not thinking but worry. It comes from thinking in a circle instead of thinking straight ahead.



## PRESCRIPTIONS



Vacillation (*folie de doute*) has the same circular character, or pendulous swing.



Thought is good, and so is action, but circularity is neither thought nor action, nor anything but a round dance of badly trained brain cells.

Even if drudgery has its blessings, it is surely no blessing to him whose life contains little or nothing else.

A rich man may find it good fun to task his muscles now and then with woodchopping or horseshoeing, but he is a fool if he supposes that the wood-chopper or the horseshoer gets this amateur's pleasure out of his trade.

Some of the good points of a job:—

(1) We want a chance to subdue.

(2) We want both monotony and variety.

(3) We want a boss. We all want a master of some kind, and most of us want a master in human shape. The more manual our work the more we want him.

(4) We want to see the product of our work. The bridge we planned, the house we built, the shoes we cobbled, help us to get before ourselves and so to realize more than a moment's worth of life and effort.

Our memory is a sieve through which most that we pick up runs back like sand. But in work we find refuge and stability, for in the accumulated product of many days' labor we can build up and present at last to our own sight the durable structure of what we meant to do.

(5) We want a handle to our name. Every one has a right to the distinction which titles of nobility are meant to give, but it is from our work that we should get them.

To "hold down a job" gives us a place in the world, something approaching the home for which in some form or other every one longs.

Why should nurses and naval officers have uniforms and rejoice in them,

while bankers and professors remain undistinguished?

While on duty I think every trade and profession should have its distinguishing dress. Our common citizenship while off duty would then be all the better expressed.

(6) We want congeniality with our fellow workmen.

When my old friend Thomas Davidson used to rail at the commercialism of our time and compare our life disdainfully to that of Athens, — I always wondered what would become of a people all of whom sat under apple trees writing poetry.

We can no more live by admiring each other's sculpture than by taking in each other's washing. It would be an awful fate to live among a nation of artists and philosophers, or to read nothing but epics and sonnets in the morning paper.

No one admires the type of man who lives on bananas in a tropical island and usually can't be hired to work, because a few days' labor each year will feed him.

Commerce like our muscles can be made beautiful, intelligent, and resourceful as well as powerful. To make it so is our present need.

*Is head-work nobler than hand-work?*

The important distinction which these phrases are meant to mark is that between Thought and Action:—thought plans action; action executes thought. Good thinking feels its way by action. Good manual work is full of thought. . . . Is n't it clear as day that brain and muscle wait each upon the other for the opportunity to do what God meant them to do?

Somewhere in our life, in our play, if not in our work, every part and ele-

ment in us ought to find a chance to praise God in its own fashion.

Tolstoy does not convince me that we are always kinder, more neighborly, more comradely in the more elemental and manual trades than in brain-work.

Tolstoy was right in insisting that morally and intellectually we need to use our muscles as well as our minds, wrong in supposing that his own noble scheme of life is ordained for all.

Let us abolish terms like "physical culture" or "mental training." To be concerned with one's mind or one's body is a morbid practice. One should be occupied with tasks that make us forget both mind and body in a higher union of both.

Thought is not nobler than action. It is the first or last stage of action and its worth depends upon the act which it plans or mirrors.

The best flowers of art, science, and virtue are always in danger while ignorance grumbles underground in volcanic unrest.

To be spiritually abased by work is virtue; to be spiritually squashed by work is failure. Common sense should teach us to take off the kettle when it boils, rather than humbly wait and be scalded when it spits.

I am concerned here with the "pushing man," relatively well-to-do, strong, sound-sleeping, and of voracious appetite. His danger is to be squashed or scalded, not by reason of poverty or overstrain, but because he does not raise his head from work to notice the ancient and beautiful world in which he lives. Industrial reform will not help him much. What he needs is common sense.

The good intentions with which hell is paved are those which we offer as



excuses for inaction, not the intentions which remained unfulfilled despite our best efforts to make them good.

If you say, "No, I have not done anything this month, but I have had the best intentions," you have condemned all the days which you describe. But if you say nothing about your intentions, make no apologies, but do your level best, then your unfulfilled intentions speak for you with the tongues of men and angels.

Sincere intentions left unfulfilled despite our best efforts are perhaps the most valuable parts and the best fruits of character.

Character talks when we are silent.

A doctor wins confidence, not by what he says, but by his methods, what he takes for granted, his unconscious presence, the foundations of his certainty laid in years of hard work.

All originality, all new ideas, are miracles and come through us rather than of our own making.

We are accustomed to think of "genius" mostly in the field of the fine arts, but I believe that all the unconscious by-products of faithful work are fashioned from the stuff of genius.

Who can say that Shelley is wrong if he attributes his moments of genius to a Power who is greater than himself, yet always at hand as answer to the prayer of utter sincerity.

X "Out of harness!" There is a deal of significance in that trivial phrase. For all work is a yoke and a harness. We slip it off every night (or ought to) and many times we hate to slip it on again in the morning.

Though our work and our science are symbolic, as I believe, of an eternal

and glorious destiny, they are literally very inglorious and insignificant. Only their intention, only the vision that creates and sustains them is great. . . . Our work is the best we know, and in it as in a ship we have embarked with our treasures; but still it is human-made, and bears the impress of our limitations.

Loyalty is a force that holds a man to his job even in moments when he hates it and sees no great significance in it. . . . It bids us be prompt at the office, to answer all letters at once, to look as brisk and interested as we can, till the mood passes and the familiar objects and occupations resume their halos.

The faith with which we hold to the routine of our calling through moods of discontent and disillusionment, is not altogether different from the faith that makes heroes, saints, and martyrs, and gives them vision of God and immortality.

Though money is no measure of the individual value of work, it gives precious assurance of *some* value, some usefulness to people out of the worker's sight.

Workers who do not need a money wage for the sake of anything they can buy with it, still need it for its spiritual value.

Exercise done for exercise' sake is of very little value, even to the body, for half of its purpose is to stimulate the will, and most wills refuse to rise at chest-weights and treadmills, however disguised.

To get any health or satisfaction out of work it must seem to the worker to be of some use. If he knows the market for raffia baskets is *nil*, and that he is merely being enticed into using his hands for the good of his muscles or his soul, he soon gets a moral nausea at the whole attempt.

This is the spiritual value of pay. So far no one has thought of so convenient and convincing a way to wrap up and deliver at each citizen's door a parcel of courage for the future, and a morsel of self-respect which is food for the soul.

*Gratitude*, given or received, is one of the best things in the world. We need far more of it and of a far better quality. . . . Thanks are a free gift and enrich the giver. There is no nobler art than the art of expressing one's gratitude in fresh, unhackneyed, unexaggerated terms.

Thinking exhausts some people and fatally confuses others. But if one thinks at all, he runs up hard against the world plan, and finds it the bulkiest object in sight.

Boys who build a boat or a playhouse usually find that there is far more fun

in the process of building than in using the finished product. So it is with reform of a slum or a municipal government. The best of it is in the reforming. We shall hardly stop to notice it when it is perfect.

“Success” in industry, in art, or in love is saved from bitterness and disappointment because we regard our achievements far more symbolically than we know, and rest far more than we are aware on the backing of God.

When we try to serve the world (or to understand it), we touch what is divine. . . . Service is one of the ways by which a tiny insect like one of us can get a purchase on the whole universe.

## PLAY

SERIOUSNESS *simon-pure* is a residual state into which one relapses when one has nothing better to do or say.

Seriousness is in itself no crime. Most of us pass through two zones of it daily, on our way to sleep at night and back again in the morning. It is a natural phenomenon when the machinery of the mind is running down, or not yet in full play. But in Heaven's name let us make no virtue of it. Let us decently conceal it, like our yawns, for (with apologies to John Milton) it is only a kind of "linked yawning long drawn out."

What an incubus we (males) carry with us in the dull and solemn monotony of our clothes. Our garments, we boast, are quiet, staid, and unob-



trusive; yes, like the mien of the drooping horse in the treadmill! But not because any one really likes them. It is simply because we are too stupefied by custom, too much cowed by the threat of fashion, to do otherwise than as our neighbors do. Who can blame us? To put a feather in our cap might lose us our job, and there are many better causes for self-sacrifice than dress reform.

Let us cease to blaspheme against the spirit of eternal youth by supposing that Play means chiefly a preparation for the "serious" work of life. Whatever has seriousness as its dominant note is a senile degeneration, a sad relapse from the healthy, adventurous playfulness of childhood.

Worst of all is, perhaps, our habit of associating morality with a drab and bleak solemnity. Why should we confuse morality, the stuff of which

heroes are made, with the dead-and-alive tissues of seriousness? . . . Our present business is, in any case, to divorce morality from dullness. God never put them together.

We need not be afraid of taking play seriously so long as we distinguish seriousness from dullness. What is more enchanting than the seriousness of child's play, — the "top-heavy solemnity" with which he applies himself to piling sand into a bucket and emptying it out again. Yet he is never dull, no matter how impressive his seriousness.

We work in part because we must, in part because we have not got what we want and are divided into a restless or unsatisfied present and a yearned-for goal in the future. But in Play we possess what we want. ✕

Let us recognize that play has a soul of its own, and that Jesus played in the

streets of his native town. (Matthew XI, 17.)

We have ceased to think of play chiefly as an indulgence, as a loosening of bonds, or even as a pleasure. We have begun to admire it not only as a recreation, but as a re-creation. . . . Great is the power of a hyphen! If play is not only recreation but re-creation, why then it is to be born again (a wholly orthodox procedure) and better born.

That mighty engine, the hyphen, which like some giant telescope has helped us to see new worlds, new freedom, springtime, and rejuvenation in the familiar word "recreation," can give it yet another glory. For what is it that art, music, literature, drama do for us? Is it not the re-creating of jaded, humdrum lives?

Art and play, then, fulfill the same function, provide us the same refresh-

ment. Moreover, they are both their own excuse for being.

In work and to some extent in love, we are building for the future; we are content to save, to sacrifice, and to repress, for the sake of a "far-off divine event." But in all art, including the variety called play, we anticipate heaven and attain immediate fruition.

Play and art, I believe, are essentially one; beauty lives in each, and though the beauty of athletics or of whist is not always obvious, it is no more obscure than the beauty of tragedy or rhyme.

Play is at least one quarter of life and love another quarter.

It must be admitted that some of the noblest and wisest men in America still think of athletics chiefly as a means to health and morality. . . . They think

of athletics, and even of dancing, as a good method to build up the body and divert sexual energy from vicious outlets. That athletics and dancing may be a means to these ends is true. It is also true that cows are a valuable means to leather boots and (I believe) to gum-drops; but I doubt if that is the end and aim of the cow's existence.

Violin-playing strengthens the fingers. But it is hardly worth while to remark that we don't play the violin for our health or for our finger-ends. Violin-playing also flattens, deforms, and callouses the finger-ends, but there are easier ways of obtaining these results. The art is good despite these drawbacks.

Football is good despite many injuries, not because it always improves health, but because it is a magnificent expression of the human spirit, a fine example of popular art.

We make a ridiculous fetish of health nowadays. Three of the very best things in life — heroism, artistic creation, and child-bearing — are often bad for the health. To avoid heroism, creative work, and child-bearing because they injure the health, would show a conception of life no more warped and distorted than that which bids us dance and be merry because forsooth it is healthy to do so!

The drama, baseball, and dancing are now the only popular arts of America to-day. Let us realize that *they are nevertheless genuine arts*, and plant them close beside music, literature, painting, and sculpture.

It is said that the best crew is the one that gets its rest between every two strokes. So between every two strokes of effort we need the games and the arts to re-create us from moment to moment, that our souls shall never be prosaic or discouraged.

To sing (or whistle) at one's work, to carry melodies and verses in our heads, to do things with a swing and a rhythm, as some Japanese and all sailors do, is to preserve our souls from drought.

I have a prejudice against precious stones because they cost so much and can be enjoyed by so few.

What jewel sparkles like the glint of a low sun on the windows of a distant house, or like dewdrops on the grass, or like the opalescent snow-crystals seen when you look toward an afternoon sun across a fresh snow-field?

What more could you get if you could pick them off the snow, keep them, and call them yours? Do the jewels that you buy ever again look so marvelous to you as they did when first you handled them on the jeweler's velvet?



A shining moment may centre the meaning of a whole month, as a single cadence dominates the development of a whole symphony.

To "play the game" of life is a phrase that is often on our lips. I think it should always include both serving and taking the return, whatever matter it may be, grave or trifling, that is sent over the net.

"Good nature" is a singularly rich and pregnant art. Did you ever think of its literal meaning, its headlong plunge to the sweet, sound core of a man? The "good-natured" man is easy to please and hard to sour, because of his supple readiness to play any minor part or game that is going on and to suggest one if nobody else offers to do so. Any minor art and any minor part suits him. He demands no leading rôles, no monument of permanence. His ready smile is the symbol of all this;

it is the flag he flies whenever a game is begun, an adventure launched, or a return taken.

Play is a little heaven, a symbol and foretaste of that closer hold on God which in worship is still more nearly attained.

When work deadens and enslaves us by its monotony, it is because it lacks either initiative or response. Slavery is all give, no take; but the slave of business habits or office routine, the drudge who never sees the product of his own labor, gets no more response from earth or soul than the beast of burden.

Much of our physiological need for recreation is in truth not a need for rest, but for freer activity. We must bend and huddle over our work to get it done without mistakes; but the stoop leaves us cramped. We want to stretch.

It is unhealthy and destructive for the human spirit to issue forth always in parsimonious dribblets, as it must in work, never letting out its full force. Play balances work because for children and childlike adults it is one of the most whole-hearted things that they ever do, — almost as enfranchising as a sneeze.

Play is drenched with symbolism and ritual. Think of the mystical significance of being "it" in tag, or in hide and seek! A unique and invisible crown of distinction descends suddenly upon a boy and he is "it." Just the tag, just the mystical laying-on of a hand, has transformed your harmless and undistinguished fellow into a bearer of destiny and danger.

A football loose in a broken field of players is the very incarnation of desire; it is only when the whistle blows for an intermission that the ball becomes as dead as the dirt beneath it.

Thus art, play, and impersonation seep into every crack and crevice of the structure called work. Is it any different in love and friendship? No friend feels friendly all the time; . . . nor can he throw up his job whenever he feels sulky and envious of those who play the leading rôles.

Sympathy is admittedly a long step towards love. . . . There is no comprehension without sympathy, and sympathy means impersonation. To cultivate love sounds mawkish and unnatural, but to cultivate sympathy is a large part of liberal education.

Charity begins at home, and impersonation, the servant and forerunner of charity, should naturally begin with the imitation of Christ. But when He told us to consider the lilies of the field, He did not invite us to look down upon them patronizingly, nor, at the other extreme, to worship their beauty. He

meant us to divest ourselves of human prejudices and to recognize their superiority to us in certain traits, — worthy our respectful and sympathetic imitation.

The net hygienic results of college football have been differently calculated by different observers. I believe they are good on the whole, though not in every team, nor in every member of any team. But even if the bad hygienic results overbalanced the good (as I think' they do in music), I should believe in the game just the same.

Pleasure is the sense of getting what we want, and play is one of the things that we want.

The *education* of minds and muscles by play is of great value. It also helps to educate us toward self-control, originality, and many other good qualities. But education, like pleasure, must usually

be forgotten if you are to attain it in play. If you think of your feet while dancing, you cannot dance.

To throw one's self into a game, as good players do, is to forget one's self and all one's possible earnings. . . . *Victory* is the part of play most often abnormally prominent in popular games. Of course nobody wants to fail in a game or anything else; but when one loses one wants to be a good loser, and this art of being a good loser is half the battle both in good play and in good living. If it is pure misery to lose (as it is in gambling), then the game or the player is debased.

In all good sport, we are in a paradoxical state of mind. We want to win, but we want still more to play the game according to the rules and against a tough antagonist. We want to win fairly and in a contest that puts us on our mettle. To win easily is not

much fun. To win by cheating leaves us aware that, in fact, we did not win at all.

Education towards good sport consists in the proper placing of the desire to win, a desire which is essentially the same in athletics, professional life, and moral aspiration.

Walking, talking, eating, running after one's hat, — every conceivable act wants to win its goal. . . . The worst of the disaster is in losing, but not in losing to somebody else.

Moral aspiration is nothing else but this "desire to win" generalized. The moral aspirant, like the athlete, has to learn the spirit of fair play and good sport. His desire to win must be disciplined till it is a desire either to win under the rules of life's game or to take defeat in good part.

"May the best man win!" . . . This prayer is the absolute and unconditional wish behind all the renunciations of good sport.

To lose a game or a political fight, without losing one's courage, is to feed on the invisible when visible food is taken away.

No sensualist, no one who has not some sort of faith in the ultimate victory of the invisible right which he serves, can keep his courage in any defeat, great or small.

No winner can avoid conceit and pride which traditionally precedes a fall, if he takes his victory at its face value. The sympathy and applause of the bystanders are rank poison to a winner who has not learned to discount them, to look away from them, and to point his admirers to the value of comrades, the wisdom of trainers,



the good luck and good team work on which he has ridden to victory.

The good winner is likely to take victory lightly for still another reason. Like the good loser, he is always looking forward to another and greater contest.

The good winner looks backward too; he is not blind to what he has won; for one ecstatic moment he tastes its full sweetness, but the next instant he looks ahead and prepares for the harder contest.

To be a good winner and a good loser is a wholly spiritual desire.

In good sport neither success nor failure is taken at its face value. Victory is not purely sweet; defeat has its compensations.

A symbol is a representative, standing for something greater than itself.

The golden balls stand for the pawnbroker, the striped suit for the convict, the cross for Christianity.

To the uninformed all symbols are meaningless. The savage may value an old newspaper more than a thousand-dollar-bill, because the newspaper is larger.

The great value of symbols is that they enable us to handle or express what would otherwise be too great for us.

People are enabled by symbols, as by switching towers in a railway yard, to plan and execute much more complex, far-reaching, and accurate results.

Whether in play, in speech, in currency, in religion, or in politics, symbols are precious because they convey a wealth of meaning in compact form.

Our moments of success or defeat are not merely what they seem on the face of them. They stand as symbolic representatives of what the law and the invisible powers of the world have put up to us. They are interpreted like words or coins by remembering what stands behind them, out of sight.

The essence of good sport, — obedience to rules, ability to be a modest winner and cheerful loser, — is also the essence of self-government, good service, and spiritual growth.

## LOVE

EACH of love's neighbors contributes something precious towards the richness of its chords. Nature gives them a new timber, art adds an ampler vibration. Playfulness, patriotism, loyalty to truth and to honor buttress and strengthen them like contrapuntal melodies.

Should one ever force or impersonate affection? Surely not, yet love, like a musical ear, can be cultivated to some extent through *knowledge*.

If we give a man every chance he is almost sure to disclose some lovable quality.

To appreciate is always in some measure to appropriate.


In a happy marriage the wife's affection for her husband is often maternal as well as conjugal. She treats him like a grown-up son, looks after him and mothers him like one of her own boys. We all know this habit and love it. We should recognize that something was missing if there were nothing *but* the maternal in a wife's attitude. But we should also recognize something missing if there were nothing but the conjugal. Moreover, the pair should be good comrades as well as husband-and-wife and mother-and-son. Together these three affections make a richer love than any one of them alone.

A father will be mainly a father to his son, but he will also be something of a comrade and a brother to him, and he will even look up to him in some respects as he would to a father.

A physical element should enter into all affection. Even to clasp hands should always be a pleasure.

Why should a man be all strength and no tenderness, or a woman all tenderness and no strength? Why should we not preserve as we grow up some of the child's playfulness, some of the boy's independence, and the girl's swift intuition?

As character is the richer for a mixture of many sympathies and interests under control of a single purpose, so I think love is ennobled when all types of affection are united within it, under the leadership of one. A mother's love for her son becomes too clinging and sentimental if she is only his mother and not also his comrade. As comrades respect each other, every mother must learn to respect something in her son, and to recognize somewhere in their relation his authority over her as well as hers over him. He will come to treat her paternally as he grows up. Very early in boyhood he will have the instinct to protect her if she recognizes and responds to it.



Jealousy is a consumption bred within the structured house of love when all its windows are sealed. When we are jealous we try to shut ourselves up in a shadowed privacy or timid miserliness. We want some one all to ourselves; we fear that if we open the doors and let in the current of others' affection or the winds of impersonal interest, our own share of love may be swept away. A woman may be jealous not only of her husband's friends, but of his work, and even of his religion. This means she has kept her windows closed and shuttered, so that she looks always at the walls of her house of love, never through and beyond them.

No good mother will admit that she loves one of her children more than another. She loves each with all her strength. There is no limit to her power of loving each of them, no limit to the amount of loveliness which she can find in each of them.

"How often shall I forgive my brother? Unto seven times?" Christ's answer: "Yea, I say unto you unto seventy times seven," does not mean four hundred and ninety. One limit is just as vicious as another. Christ meant that our forgiveness of any one whom we love is infinite, — that in true love there is literally no end to forgiveness so long as it means not condoning or forgetting, but the ampler understanding which is pardon.

We can make it hard for the gigantic forces about us to do their proper work within us. We can plaster up all the chinks of our nature for a time, but we cannot long escape the "majestic instance" of God.

Symbolism is a late and meager growth in many of us New Englanders, showing itself considerably more in play than in love or worship. . . . Literally a word is nothing but a grunt or



a cough, a vibrating current of air in the larynx, or a series of black marks on white paper. Yet by almost every one these literal facts are symbolically interpreted.

The average American is stiff and awkward when he tries to use symbols. Current thought and life discourage the use of such imagination and penetrative intelligence as symbolism demands: for a symbol which does its work must awaken us to the invisible.

✓ The marriage vow is a great symbol because it calls up with marvelous swiftness and vividness great realms of the past and future, moments which have led up to the consummation of this union, happiness which we look to in the future.

Any symbolic act or phrase points beyond itself. The most sacred symbols point to the widest and most precious reaches of invisible life.

The physical symbolism of affection expresses another deep human need. The clasp of two hands is literally a physical contact of two pieces of human flesh. Woefully secular and lifeless it can be! We all know the flabby, the clinging, the nervous, the icy hand-grasp. Yet who has not sometimes rejoiced in the grasp of a hand that conveys life and love?

Your best friend strikes thoughts and deeds out of you that you never knew were in you, and that truly were not full formed in you till your friend woke them to life.

It is through the symbolism of the physical acts such as meeting, parting, or waiting upon one another's physical wants that one understands the deeper significance of conjugal affection.

We are often told that we should "teach" the sacredness of the body. Yes, but the body is most sacred when

most forgotten in the absorption of hard work or clean sport, in the enthusiasm of dancing, painting, singing, oratory, love, or worship.

When we build our houses, and sweep our offices, clothe and feed our children, we look through these acts to a deeper significance behind them. We do them in the name of the highest that we know, — be it business, family, nation, or God.

Love is *consecrated* not only by its purity from foreign admixtures, but by taking up into itself the best life of elemental nature, knowledge, art, play, patriotism, and the devoted search for truth. . . . When through symbolism we “hold infinity in the palm of our hand” (or our handclasp) and “eternity in an hour,” we are at the altar of consecration.

When we are at our best, a flood of life pours itself out in the simple old

words, "Good-morning," — a flood of meaning which strains to express itself in a thousand ways, but has to be content with verbal symbols.

Nothing can force us to find a thing sacred; nothing can remain secular if we determine to make it sacred. . . . A symbolic deed of love is mystical, not because it is vague, but because of the richness of meaning packed into one narrow act.

In all practical affairs (among which the average American does not include affection) we know that loyal adherence to one's original intention, however one happens to feel, is one of the greatest forces that make for success. Passivity, reliance on the moment's whim, literalism in reading the face of the future or of the present, is fatal to happiness and to success.

It takes but little experience to show us that no human being is merely

what he is seen to be at any one moment. He can no more display himself in a single act or a single year than a musical theme can be expressed in one of its notes. . . . So a human being is in truth all that he has been and can become, not because he now embodies it, but because that vast arc is the only sufficient explanation of his behavior, the only working basis for affection.

The process of "getting the jump on" any one is an expression in modern slang of a spiritual truth which sustains the life of industry, invigorates science as well as religion, and is the essence of psycho-therapeutic "suggestion."

You can make a sentence or a person mean different things by the emphasis you put on selected bits. Then, if you are tactful, you pick out and answer the meaning most in harmony with the whole texture of your friendship; the other meanings you ignore. I do not

mean anything subtle. A woman hears in her husband's greeting at night fatigue, anxiety, a shade of irritability, and a touch of playfulness. She ignores all but the playfulness, and by encouraging that healing element helps him to recover his balance. Just so she starves out some of her child's faults by choosing to ignore them and to cultivate his best.

An old Scotch phrase describes a lively companion as "good at the up-take." He is responsive, always ready to help out, always keen for the game. If he pauses it is but to make sure what the game is. On such responsiveness friendship thrives.

In love, as in work and in play, give-and-take is *the* great source of novelty, of creativeness, and so of miracle.

When marriage is late or unhappy, because of poverty, because people

cannot find their mates, or for less worthy reasons, love becomes impersonal, a blind, gigantic world-energy, hardly a blessing, easily a curse. . . . In perverted forms love falls from the spiritual heights of choice and mutual understanding, and is swept into a current where there are no distinctions between right and wrong, between higher and lower, between person and person, or between person and thing. The essential shame of perverted affection is its impersonality.

Is there one of us who does not sometimes treat a person like a machine? Do we always think of the railroad conductor as more than a machine for taking tickets? Do we not often treat our fellow creatures like masks or flat cards without substance and personality.

Love at its best is a command as well as a desire and an intimacy. Its



law reads, "Find and create a new personality in so far as loyalty to your previous pledges and insights allows you."

If your love is pledged to one God, it is sacrilege to worship others. If you have sworn fealty to one country, it is treason to work against it in the interests of another. If you commit yourself to the faith of Christ, you cannot experiment with teachings which contradict it, unless you first renounce your faith.

When we listen to good music we are actually listening to the outpourings of the composer's heart. He is speaking to us earnestly and intensely and we are listening to him, — not to it.

In less personal types of love, falsely called "physical," an elemental impulse, almost blind to the sacred meaning of its trend, is groping its way along. We should help it to find its goal, instead of branding it as forever outcast.



The more degraded a man is the more he is hurt by our contempt.

A hundred recent books on "sex hygiene" tell us that we should teach the sacredness of the body and of sex. But the instant we have branded love as "body" or as "sex" we have begun to deprive it of sacredness. For the sacredness of love comes from choice, and a "body" cannot choose. The sacredness of love springs from enthusiasm and self-direction such as no "body" possesses.

Passion can be mastered only by an intenser passion, not by any power that stands aloof and contemptuously denies its kinship. Personality is what we want in love, because personality is always both physical and spiritual.

Jealousy and idolatry are opposite perversions. In jealousy you want to keep a person wholly to yourself. In

idolatry you want to give yourself wholly to a person.

The idea that *anything* can profitably be blurted out in any language and to any audience, the ideal of pure frankness, is babyish and barbaric. Babies and fools have no reserves, because they make no choices. Personality, decency, and all that is human in us grows up through selection. By their choice of work, of play, of companions, of words, people are made what they are.

There is no virtue in emptying out your mind as a boy does his pockets; for minds, like pockets, contain not only valuables, but rubbish of all sorts.

Without a free gift of good nature there can be no mutual understanding, especially in love. Congeniality, physical, intellectual, emotional, or spiritual, can never be perfect as long as we remain human, growing, imperfect beings.

To ignore the romance in love, in history, in games, in music, or anywhere else, is one of the easiest things in the world. One has only to slouch because one is sick of standing erect, to refuse the task of looking behind the obvious and relapse into sleepy literalism.

Every one finds romance in what he loves. He cannot keep it out. No one finds romance when he is too indifferent to look for it or too tired to translate symbols into meaning. A baby is a lump of flesh, a symphony is a long confused noise, a picture is a bit of discolored canvas, and man is an ugly, featherless biped to any one who has not interest enough to see more.

Moral and spiritual growth certainly ought to take place in the marriage relation, but it is often forgotten that change and growth are not the same. Change may be so radical as to destroy growth. Forest fires and popular crazes

are changes which abolish development. Nothing grows unless it has a central core of identity which does not change. A tree can be changed into parlor matches, but it cannot grow parlor matches like leaves.

No man likes his business every day: sometimes he loathes it; yet he knows that to throw it up and try another, or to drift about, would be crazy. He learns to disregard or to crush his impulses of repulsion for his job. He must "make good" in it whether he feels like it or not.

All this we Americans have learned in business because work is the thing we have learned best. But in love a wave of indifference or dislike is taken very seriously, perhaps interpreted to mean "time for divorce" or "right to be unfaithful." We are foolish enough to expect constancy of feeling in love, though we know that in everything else our feelings vary like the weather.

No one need insist that all marriages are made in heaven and could not have been better arranged. But is there not every reason to suppose that in marriage, as in work, it generally pays for partners to stay together and finish the structure of family life which they have started? . . . As time goes on husband and wife each acquire a hold upon the other like that of the musician and his violin. Each stimulates the other, now and then at least, to his best work, his best citizenship, his greatest happiness. Outsiders can rarely do so much.

Within the field of personal relations one should be loyal to each of one's subordinate ties, to friend, business associate, official superior or inferior, mere acquaintance, each after his kind.

Some of the best traits of marriage, — the subtle understanding of what need not be spoken, the instinctive habit of filling in one another's deficien-

cies, of anticipating one another's needs, — these never have time to develop unless man and wife resist some of the storms and shocks of their earlier years.

Perhaps the greatest blessing in marriage is that it lasts so long. The years, like the varying interests of each year, combine to buttress and enrich each other. Out of many shared years, one life. In a series of temporary relationships, one misses the ripening, gathering, harvesting joys, the deep, hard-won truths of marriage.

The ripening of money by compound interest is slow and feeble compared to the ripening of compounded interests in married life.

All security ties some future's hands in order that we may risk something else. Fortified by good health one may risk money; buttressed by money one may perhaps risk health. In marriage

the security ordinarily attained is this: there is some one who forgives us more often and more freely than the unmarried can expect; some one who makes God's infinite forgiveness more credible. There is some one who loves us long after we have forfeited any natural right to be loved and long before we have won any. Supernatural in this sense marriage almost always is; thus it prepares and enfranchises us for religion.

✓ Forgiveness is to the spirit what home is to the householder. It is the assurance that in the house of the spirit some one waits for our deed, — the deed never yet done, but always due. That expectation is a stronghold to which we return at night, from which we carry vigor to our morning's work.

Inasmuch as we learn to see the perpetual novelty, rest, and charm which marriage offers to all, we have mastered



one stage in the art of unsated happiness and of unchecked growth. Successfully married people have more news to tell each other and more capacity to hear it eagerly than any less closely, less durably united couple can have.

If in marriage a man cannot learn to see himself as others see him, he will probably never learn it at all. . . . If family life does not spur him so to envisage the distant and the future that he expresses himself and controls himself somewhat as the present demands, he is apt to remain a donkey to the end.

Everybody wants to be understood by somebody; but in the natural course of events everybody is more or less misunderstood or distortedly understood by most of his friends and acquaintances. . . . Marriage gives us the best chance in sight to grasp our share of complete mutual comprehension. I believe that any benedict among us,



the "pick and shovel" man, the shipping clerk, the plumber, or the railroad magnate, is more apt to be understood by his wife than by any other human being.

✓ One can miss the best happiness of marriage because one travels through it in kid gloves, Pullman cars, first-class staterooms, and grand hotels. Rich, city-bred, voluntarily childless, one can mince through marriage as sight-seers promenade in a forest on a graveled path with hand-rails, signposts, and seats. On the other hand, one may know marriage as Kipling's Mowgli knew the forests, because he traveled as well in the tree-tops as on the springy ground.

Marriage, then, as a great teacher and symbol, bids us, first of all, study the facts, learn our technique faithfully, and play the game for all it is worth, with no shirking of its hard

knocks, no fatuous assumption that we know it before we have learned it, no quailing before the twin giants, — Success and Failure, — who are to be enemies or friends as we shall decide. We follow the game wherever it leads.

## WORSHIP

How many in whom we least suspect it are longing to pray! How many who hardly suspect it themselves! I believe that the craving to sing is but a partial and imperfect image of the craving to pray. What song is to prosy speech, that prayer is to song. It is the supremely personal and direct utterance for which creation longs, for which hard toil prepares.

Yet worship is out of fashion. The average man thinks of it as something mediæval or obsolete.

We must recognize the value of symbolic and habitual acts like kneeling. Physical attitudes help us to think and to feel as well as to pray. There is nothing more ceremonious and superstitious about kneeling and closing the eyes

before prayer than there is about lying down to promote sleep. In both cases the action initiates and promotes the state of mind which we desire.

We moderns are indifferent or averse to worship, not because it employs ceremonies and symbols, but largely because of our clumsy shyness in the use of this particular set.

But though many of us are now adrift and far from the land of worship, the shores of the great continent are vast and deep-cut and the wind of the spirit blows perpetually toward them. We may not land and explore, but we can never tack very far from the shore.

Whenever beauty overwhelms us, whenever wonder silences our chattering hopes and worries, we are close to worship. Unless we are blind to beauty, deaf to the call of righteous battle, incapable of prolonged reflection, a stran-

ger to the poignancies of joy and sorrow, incapable of wonder, we are in perpetual danger of falling into worship as the tired mortal falls asleep.

Worship is the conscious love of the Spirit of the Universe, and we need it regularly like food or sleep.

The mind is hungry for truth and for the whole truth; it grows weak and restless when it has only fragments to feed upon.

One need not jeer at the worshiper for spending so little time on that which he declares to be his salvation. For it is in work, play, and love that he must earn the right to pray as he earns the right to sleep. No one can find out except by trying whether he needs prayer once an hour, once a week, or less often.

We often advise each other to "think it over and see what *on the whole* seems

best"; or we say, "*All things considered*, I have decided to go." Any one who did this would be near to prayer. "Considering all things" is turning from part to whole, from brilliant near-seen views, all foreground, no perspective, to a vision like that from a mountain-top. Whoever tries to "see life steadily, and see it whole," by retiring to a viewpoint detached from the current quotations and the latest news, has moved in the direction of prayer.

We live in choked and confused foregrounds, full of noise and fury, but crammed with significance. We must not miss the message of the moment. Your soul and mine are Parts of God. We forget this. Prayer reminds us.

When lost in the woods you climb the highest tree in sight. From the top you may be able to see where you have come from, where you are, and where you should go next. Such a view is precisely

what prayer gives. The best way to get ahead is sometimes to stop short and see where we are. The best way to advance our work is, sometimes, to lay it aside and go to bed. On the whole, all things considered, we may find ourselves on the 'wrong track. Then our pause has been time well spent.

The locomotive engineer, peering about the vitals of his engine during a stop, has often reminded me of Sunday worship. The shopman who periodically closes shop and refuses customers, while he takes account of stock, knows better, at the end of the pause, where, on the whole, he is and what he should do next.

The factory engineer knows that his machinery, like his help, needs to rest one day in seven. When the power is turned off, he can go carefully over his machinery, find flaws and weak spots (as any one of us finds them in himself

when he prays), and thus true up the whole.

No one is armor-proof against forgetfulness. Most of the facts and the faces that we meet soon become as dead as if they had never lived in our experience. We do not keenly regret their death. But our plight becomes more serious when we forget what we had intended to remember. To me the stupendous total of our unintended forgettings is one of the tragic and humiliating facts of existence.

Home life, business life, and recreation dwell in compartments so separate that each forgets the others and may contradict them. This division and mutual estrangement of our energies surely calls for some effort to pull ourselves together, to introduce the different sides of ourselves each to each and see them at least coöperate instead of competing. When we set ourselves to



this work of collecting or re-collecting the scattered pieces of ourselves, we begin a task which, if carried to its natural conclusion, ultimately becomes prayer.

To see straight, to speak or write truly, we have first and chiefly to get ourselves cleansed of the encrusted deposits of other people's ideas, and of our own caked habits.

We often say to each other that the person who has lost, or never acquired, the capacity for *wonder*, is bound to dry up. Premature senility is always threatening him if his mind cannot rest in admiration. If he cannot surrender himself to pure wonder in the presence of a child, a crystal, a sky-scraper, a starry night, or a leaping salmon, he does not get that bath of spiritual refreshment which keeps us young. Wonder rejuvenates us first because it floats off the load of responsibility; for the

moment it washes the mind clean of all thoughts, good and bad, sad or pleasing. Thereby wonder brings our ordinary mental life to a standstill. . . . For wonder, like beauty, is a gate we are not meant to swing on. We are to open and pass through into prayer or into action.

I have given up trying to believe that in sorrow and failure we can always find blessings disguised. I now think that such blows may contract, harden, even crush, a soul until it has, so far as we can see, no power to react. . . . Yet though I do not believe that it is always a good thing to be balked and thrown back upon ourselves, I cannot doubt that it *may* be just what we need. It depends upon what else there is in the sufferer and around him.

But whether the final outcome of sorrow and failure is good or bad, their immediate effect is certainly to pull us up short. "No farther now in that di-

rection," they say to us. "Give up these hopes, shut up that desk, lay down those tools." One of the results of this arrest is to make us look ourselves squarely in the face, and a rueful sight it is for most of us! We are eager to recommend such a mirror to others, but rarely feel the need of it ourselves.

We rarely do any thinking unless we have to; one of the forces which most often knocks us out of self-contentment in a round of conventional or unconventional habits, is misfortune. When forced to reflect and be reflected, I may be driven to ask, "What am I here for?" "What have I been doing?" Then I touch the solid ground of repentance, near to prayer.

Thinking is not worship, but if it is initiated by a wrench of sorrow which banishes the half gods of our superficial existence, God may appear. This is why we need the wrench.

Any responsibility, vividly felt, calls the risk of failure to our minds, and at the same time centers those risks around our own decisive action. We see how small is our ingenuity compared with the incalculable chances of disaster. But we also see that just here and now the universe has put it "up to us." Like other prayer-compelling forces, responsibility is always close to us. Opportunity is always now or never for us, and every day is a Judgment Day.

As an axe blow upon a tree, shaking the ground in which it is rooted, shivers through the entire globe and out through every part of the universe, so any act spreads outward through a network of endless consequences.

Many of us put on for company an artificial manner, a forced expression, or a "society smile." This mask need not be false or fraudulent in the ordi-

nary sense. It may be only the expression of that decent self-respect which makes us stand erect instead of slouching, or dress ourselves properly before appearing in public. Yet propriety is a mask which may hide us from ourselves, if it becomes habitual. We forget to take off our "society" thoughts with our "society" clothes. The habit of keeping up with the moods and demands of the others may dampen and finally quench the desire to be sincere with ourselves. It may keep us from asking ultimate questions or entertaining ultimate doubts. . . . Our best as well as our worst may be buried under the disguises of moral and social effort.

A dread of solitude is often partially responsible for the abortiveness of this recoil toward prayer. . . . And solitude in its literal sense, which we do not often face, is really hell. If in solitude you meet no fresh thoughts, which lead you back to the sources of healing and for-

givenness, if instead you meet only the tortures of helpless loneliness, then solitude is your worst foe. But in the populous solitude of disenthralment, the noises which drown God's voice are stilled.

In church we see the possibility of directing and martialing the gregarious impulses of mankind so as to concentrate and reinforce our theotropic power. The forces that make soldiers steadier and bolder when they can touch shoulders, may also magnify in every member of a congregation the timorous impulse toward worship. For the crowd is not simply gathered together, but gathered together in the name of Christ, under the leadership and unifying influence of a revered personality.

This is the spirit in which we ought to go to church, if we go at all, because we love it and find there our chance for service and for refreshment, a renewing

of tarnished standards, an outlet for reverence and aspiration.

When a child wakes in the grip of a nightmare, sobs and stammers it out to his mother, and finds that its horrors have swiftly vanished, he has discovered the value of confession. By confession he marshals his troubles in consciousness and spreads them out in form and order; thus he gains command of them and of himself.

✓ We long for harmony, not only with the better part of our own selves, not only with the quite fallible and temporary institutions of society, but with the bottom principle of things. If we follow home the impulse, it prompts confession to One who knows better than we how to frame that confession and hears what we mean but cannot say.

Many who are aware of God, and try to live according to what they be-



lieve to be his will, still feel that petition is a relic of barbarous or naïve ages, something not to be taken seriously by reasonable people. Prayers for rain, for victory in battle, for the recovery of the sick, — what are these but frantic attempts to break the laws of nature?

No one who believes in God, and thinks of duty as the increasing approximation to his will, can absolutely desire any particular commodity or immunity. Every wish becomes conditional and has a "string to it." Strange though it sounds, a conditional wish is not absurd nor even uncommon. You want to win your football game, — yes, but you don't want to win by any means or unconditionally. You want to win if you can do so under the rules of the game and with no more luck than is compatible with dominance of skill and science. . . . Your desire to win is limited on every side. If it be possible,



I want victory. Nevertheless, let the best man win. Let the traditions of good sport be maintained whoever wins or loses. If I can only win by a fluke or a fraud, then I want to lose and lose well.

If we admit that "all prayer that craves a particular commodity — anything less than all good — is mean and vile," do we eliminate all the prayers that any needy mortal wants to make? "All good" is a pretty large order and a tolerably vague one. In answer to this question, which often troubled me in past years, Christ's words in the garden of Gethsemane now seem wholly satisfying: "If it be possible, let this cup pass from me. Nevertheless, thy will, not mine, be done."

Whoever, by religious instinct or religious philosophy, has come to believe that the universe is a team of which he is a member, wants the success of

the team unconditionally and with his whole heart, and wants nothing else, save with the condition, "provided this does not contravene the needs of the team." Such is the spirit of Christ's prayer.

Any one who sincerely wants the truth, even when it wrecks his other desires, is in the attitude of prayer. . . . If he is sincere he means to find the Truth, or the nearest available approach to it, and to correct his decision as often as new light appears. This desire, like all desires to find the solid fact or the True Course of action, is really an infinite desire. The presence of such an infinite desire judging our finite failings is the presence of God in our prayer.

Petition, then, is not a mean whimpering for favors; it is the only honorable and manly act for any one in doubt about his belief or his course of action.

Hence prayer does not always mean renunciation. It means perpetual readiness either for victory or for renunciation, whichever is the verdict of the best judgment in sight. So far as we achieve this readiness, we achieve as deep a peace as any human being has a right to.

Prayer is a struggle for mutual accommodation between one of my desires and the judge of all my desires, a struggle born of our need to live at peace together.

Any one who has been carried away from his usual moorings by a wave of intense gratitude for opportunity, for human nobility, or for beauty, must have noticed the painful internal pressure of the desire *to repay some one*, while at the same instant the impossibility of adequately repaying any one stares him in the face. . . . Benefits received from any one of God's creatures can be repaid to any or all of the others.

X By tracing out the full meaning of gratitude, I believe one might trace the full outline of belief in God and in immortality. For gratitude, like love, is by birth and lineage an infinite emotion, satisfied with no finite service or praise, exhausted by no measure of effort and expression.

By overflowing enthusiasm and by gratitude, we are enticed near to the shores of prayer, and no human being can ever deny to another the right to believe that in some moment of joy and thanksgiving he has actually landed and knelt.

That sunset, that magnificent thunderstorm, what are they really meant for? Whom or what do they help in the struggle for existence? They were there before man came on the earth, they surely do not fit me; they humiliate and overwhelm me. They are meant for some one else, yet I, too, understand a

bit of them. I say that they are aimed like all reverence toward God. They hit you and me on the way because we are on the path to him.

The person who cannot be "carried away" by any music is to be pitied, not admired, on that account. He probably lacks a musical ear or an acquaintance with the human experience which music portrays. He is blighted and numb like one who cannot fall in love.

Though nothing can be plainer or more terrible than sin, the shameful and intentional violation of our own standards, it is now fashionable to ignore it. This will not do. The attempt to dilute and modify sin by calling it "unintentional mistake" or "an infraction of unconventional rules" means muddle-headedness or sophistry. No one loses the consciousness of sin unless he loses it on purpose, that is, by sinning until he has calloused himself.

Absolute obedience is a virtue not highly prized in America to-day. But whatever be our belief as to the need of it in other fields, there can be no question that absolute forgiveness presupposes absolute obedience. If we are to be forgiven we must be beaten to a standstill: "Lord, here am I: what wouldst thou that I should do?"

We moderns are proud to say that we owe absolute obedience only to our consciences, but I wonder how many of us possess a conscience that is quite uninfluenced by desire to be easy on the culprit?

X The forgiveness of sin is, perhaps, the whole of the *answer to prayer*, its all-inclusive result.

When saint or sinner asks with all his might: "What shall I do next?" . . . he is reaching for the truth and the right. Ultimately he is reaching for

God's help, and when his question is answered he gets all he can hear of the answer to prayer.

The need of worship reflects an intense weariness with what is old and habitual, a hunger for what is radically new and untried. In the pain of spiritual fatigue, it is the "impulse for spiritual self-preservation," and renews the worth of life as we see it by reminding us of our ultimate Good.

In worship we seek to know our God by absorption and contagion, as we catch the spirit of a commanding gesture, or feel the sweep of a national crisis. We throw ourselves into worship as we dive into the ocean, confident of its well-tested power to lift and refresh us, but no longer balancing, sustaining, or directing ourselves by step and step as we do on the land of ordinary thought and action.

The answer to prayer is in the forgiveness of sins, conditioned by the sincerity of our repentance and in a heightened power of fresh or original vision, which is the servant of reform.

To live is to talk with the world. Work, Play, Love, and Worship are four good ways of keeping up the conversation. . . . I will not say that worship is the climax and culmination of all that is most active in daily life. For God can be reached through many channels outside worship. But to it man returns from all other activities as he comes back to his home, — the common goal and starting-point of every fresh endeavor.

Absolute faithfulness in work, in play, or in love, brings us into contact with God whether we know it or not.

We cannot get away from God, though we can ignore Him.



When love springs up between two people who have not known hard work, their union lacks something that labor would have taught them. Such an affection lacks the patience, the long foresight, and tenacious memory which work trains, while in the process it knocks some of the nonsense out of us. So work teaches us to love. On the other hand, love teaches us how and why to work.

Work, Love, and Play make a strong team together. They brace and reinforce each other. Yet they all leave us rudderless and unsatisfied without prayer. . . . The harder we work and play, and the more intensely we devote ourselves to whomever and whatever we love, the more pressing is our need for reorienting, recommitting, refreshing ourselves in an appeal to God.

The most religious people are not those who talk and write the most

about God, but those who best prove their love in faithful performance of what they believe to be His will.

By originality and by symbolism, then, the home of our spirit is consecrated, but still more truly, perhaps, by our free and final allegiance. Our will is needed to invest the world with its own divinity. We hoist a flag and take possession once for all with a sort of "cosmic patriotism," grateful for our escape from chaos and the dark.

THE END







LaVergne, TN USA  
24 August 2009

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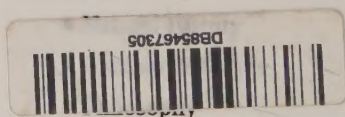




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